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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNGA](#) [IR](#) [SO](#) [ER](#) [DJ](#) [SA](#) [IS](#) [WB](#) [GZ](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE RESPONSE: SAUDI THOUGHTS ON THE ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL

REF: SECSTATE 92629

Classified By: CDA Richard Erdman for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) During a September 8 farewell call with Deputy Foreign Minister for Bilateral Affairs Ambassador Khalid Al-Jindan (septel), Charge reviewed reftel points regarding the upcoming Arab League Ministerial. Jindan said the Arab League was likely to condemn the violence in Iraq and express support for the political process; did not want to see Eritrea play a destabilizing role in Somalia; and was likely to express "disappointment" and "disenchantment" with current Israeli-Palestinian developments. Details follow.

¶2. (C) IRAQ: The recent Iraq-Syria row was escalating, according to Jindan, and risked becoming "serious." Charge said the U.S. hoped the Arab League would condemn recent violence and express support for the Iraqi electoral process. He noted that individual Arab states as well as Arab League Secretary General Moussa had already done this, but that it would be helpful if the Arab League as a whole could issue such a statement. Saudi Arabia, together with the Arab League, was interested in helping to stabilize Iraq, Jindan responded, and it was likely that the ministerial communique would include language along these lines.

¶3. (C) SOMALIA: There had been positive developments, Jindan observed, concurring it was important to support the TFG and the Djibouti Peace Process. Charge emphasized USG concerns that Eritrea was supporting the Al-Shabaab and other extremist groups, and expressed strong hope that the Arab League would take steps to ensure aid to Eritrea was not being diverted to the Al-Shabaab. The Arab League was focused on solving the Eritrea-Djibouti border dispute, Jindan responded, assuring Charge they did not want to see Eritrea play a destabilizing role.

¶4. (C) MIDDLE EAST PEACE: Jindan described the Arabs as "anxious," and looking forward to President Obama's statement at UNGA. "We have seen no positive steps lately, and we are quite worried," he confessed, adding that the Arab League could be expected to express "disappointment" and "disenchantment" with current developments. Charge noted that the communique following the last Arab League ministerial in June had adopted a generally positive tone regarding efforts to create a climate conducive to discussion. While ideally we would like to see more specific language about steps that could be taken to create a positive atmosphere, we hoped the communique from this week's ministerial could take a similar, positive tone, and avoid unhelpful rhetoric that would only complicate an already complicated situation. Charge also reiterated the importance of budget support for the Palestinian Authority, and thanked the Saudis for their recent \$200 million dollar contribution to the PA's coffers. The well-being of the Palestinians was at the "core of Saudi thinking," said Jindan, and Saudi support for both the PA and the Egyptian-led reconciliation process would continue.

ERDMAN